

THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for providing exclusive control of a device's capabilities to a user over a network, the method comprising the steps of:

requesting, by an information processing apparatus, that the device provides the user with exclusive control of the device's capabilities;

determining, by the device, whether the device is available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities;

in a case where the device determines in the determining step that the device is available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities, providing, by the device, the user with exclusive control of the device's capabilities;

in a case where the device determines in the determining step that the device is not available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities, adding, by the device, the user to a reservation queue of users requesting to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities;

requesting, by the information processing apparatus, that the device process a job using the device's capabilities; and

adding, by the device, the job to a job queue of jobs to be processed using the device's capabilities,

wherein, if the device provides exclusive control of the device's capabilities to the user when the user is at a first position within the reservation queue, a job at a first position within the job queue, corresponding to a user other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, is deferred from being processed

during a period in which the user, who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities.

2. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein providing exclusive control of the device's capabilities by the device comprises the device temporarily deferring requests by users other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities to perform operations utilizing the device's capabilities during a period in which the user maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities.

3. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the determining step by the device comprises the device determining whether the device is under exclusive control of another user.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 3, wherein, in a case where the device determines in the determining step that the device is under exclusive control of another user, further comprising the device determining whether the user requesting exclusive control of the device has a higher priority than the other user and, if the requesting user does have a higher priority than the other user, the device temporarily yielding exclusive control of the device to the requesting user, thereby providing the requesting user with exclusive control of the device.

5. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the determining step by the device comprises the device determining whether the user is authorized to obtain exclusive control of the device.

6. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein, in a case where the user is added to the reservation queue of users requesting exclusive control of the device by the device, the device adding the user at a position within the reservation queue based on a priority of the user.

7. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 6, wherein the user advances in the reservation queue as other users are removed from the reservation queue, and when the user reaches the first position within the reservation queue, the device providing the user with exclusive control of the device and notifying the user that exclusive control has been provided.

8. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 6, wherein the user advances in the reservation queue as other users are removed from the reservation queue, and when the user reaches the first position within the reservation queue, the device notifying the user that exclusive control of the device can be obtained and waiting a predetermined time for the user to confirm that exclusive control is to be provided.

9. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 8, wherein after the predetermined time has elapsed, the device removing the user from the reservation queue and notifying the user that the user has been removed from the reservation queue.

10. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 8, wherein after the predetermined time has elapsed, the device moving the user to a new position within the reservation queue.

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 10, wherein the new position is a last position within the reservation queue.

12. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 10, wherein the new position is based on the user's priority as compared with other users in the reservation queue.

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the device is a multifunction device and wherein the device's capabilities comprise printing, facsimile, scanning and copying.

14. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein, in a case where the device determines in the determining step that the device is available for the

user to obtain exclusive control, further comprising the step of the device authenticating the user before the user is provided exclusive control of the device.

15. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein, in a case where the user is provided with exclusive control of the device, further comprising the steps of:

the device obtaining identification information of the user; and

based on the obtained identification information, the device automatically manipulating a print job within the job queue so as to print out the job pending in the job queue for the user during a period in which the user maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities, while temporarily deferring at least one job pending in the job queue.

16. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer readable medium, the process steps executed by a device to provide exclusive control to a user of the device's capabilities, comprising the steps of:

receiving, from an information processing apparatus, a request to provide the user with exclusive control of the device's capabilities;

determining whether the device is available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities;

in a case where the determining step determines that the device is available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities, providing the user with exclusive control of the device's capabilities;

in a case where the determining step determines that the device is not available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities, adding the user to a reservation queue of users requesting to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities; and

adding a job to a job queue of jobs to be processed using the device's capabilities,

wherein, if the device provides exclusive control of the device's capabilities to the user when the user is at a first position within the reservation queue, a job at a first position within the job queue, corresponding to a user other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, is deferred from being processed during a period in which the user, who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities.

17. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 16, wherein providing exclusive control of the device's capabilities comprises temporarily deferring requests by users other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities to perform operations utilizing the device's capabilities during a period in which the user maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities.

18. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 16, wherein the determining step comprises determining whether the device is under exclusive control of another user.

19. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 18, wherein, in a case where the determining step determines that the device is under exclusive control of another user, further comprising determining whether the user requesting exclusive control of the device has a higher priority than the other user and, if the requesting user does have a higher priority than the other user, temporarily yielding exclusive control of the device to the requesting user, thereby providing the requesting user with exclusive control of the device.

20. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 16, wherein the determining step comprises determining whether the user is authorized to obtain exclusive control of the device.

21. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 16, wherein, in a case where the user is added to the reservation queue of users requesting exclusive control of the device, adding the user at a position within the reservation queue based on a priority of the user.

22. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 21, wherein the user advances in the reservation queue as other users are removed from the reservation queue, and when the user reaches the first position within the reservation queue, providing the user with exclusive control of the device and notifying the user that exclusive control has been provided.

23. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 21, wherein the user advances in the reservation queue as other users are removed from the reservation queue, and when the user reaches the first position within the reservation queue, notifying the user that exclusive control of the device can be obtained and waiting a predetermined time for the user to confirm that exclusive control is to be provided.

24. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23, wherein after the predetermined time has elapsed, removing the user from the reservation queue and notifying the user that the user has been removed from the reservation queue.

25. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23, wherein after the predetermined time has elapsed, moving the user to a new position within the reservation queue.



26. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 25, wherein the new position is a last position within the reservation queue.

27. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 25, wherein the new position is based on the user's priority as compared with other users in the reservation queue.

28. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 16, wherein the device is a multifunction device and wherein the device's capabilities comprise printing, facsimile, scanning and copying.

29. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 16, wherein, in a case where the determining step determines that the device is available for the user to obtain exclusive control, further comprising the step of authenticating the user before the user is provided exclusive control of the device.

30. (Previously Presented) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 16, wherein, in a case where the user is provided with exclusive control of the device, further comprising the steps of:

obtaining identification information of the user; and

based on the obtained identification information, automatically manipulating a print job within the job queue so as to print out the print job pending in the

job queue for the user during a period in which the user maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities, while temporarily deferring at least one print job pending in the job queue.

31. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium on which is stored computer-executable code to be executed by a device for providing exclusive control to a user of the device's capabilities, the computer-executable code comprising:

- receiving, from an information processing apparatus, a request for exclusive control of the device's capabilities;
- determining whether the device is available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities;
- in a case where the determining step determines that the device is available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities, providing the user exclusive control of the device's capabilities;
- in a case where the determining step determines that the device is not available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities, adding the user to a reservation queue of users requesting exclusive control of the device's capabilities; and
- adding a job to a job queue of jobs to be processed using the device's capabilities,

wherein, if the device provides exclusive control of the device's capabilities to the user when the user is at a first position within the reservation queue, a job at a first position within the job queue, corresponding to a user other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, is deferred from being processed during a period in which the user, who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities.

32. to 45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for providing a user with exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, the apparatus comprising:

- a memory which stores computer-executable process steps; and
- a processor which executes the computer-executable process steps, the computer-executable process steps comprising (a) receiving, via a network from an information processing apparatus, a request to provide the user with exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, (b) determining whether the apparatus is available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, (c) in a case where the determining step determines that the apparatus is available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, providing the user with exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, (d) in a case where the determining step determines that the apparatus is not available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, adding the user to a reservation queue of users requesting to obtain exclusive

control of the apparatus' capabilities, and (e) adding a job to a job queue of jobs to be processed using the apparatus' capabilities,

wherein, if the device provides exclusive control of the device's capabilities to the user when the user is at a first position within the reservation queue, a job at a first position within the job queue, corresponding to a user other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, is deferred from being processed during a period in which the user, who has been provided exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, maintains exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities.

47. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein providing exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities comprises temporarily deferring requests by users other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities to perform operations utilizing the apparatus' capabilities during a period in which the user maintains exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities.

48. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein the determining step comprises determining whether the apparatus is under exclusive control of another user.

49. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 48, wherein, in a case where the determining step determines that the apparatus is under exclusive control of another user, further comprising determining whether the user requesting

exclusive control of the apparatus has a higher priority than the other user and, if the requesting user does have a higher priority than the other user, temporarily yielding exclusive control of the apparatus to the requesting user, thereby providing the requesting user with exclusive control of the apparatus.

50. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein the determining step comprises determining whether the user is authorized to obtain exclusive control of the apparatus.

51. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein, in a case where the user is added to the reservation queue of users requesting exclusive control of the apparatus, adding the user at a position within the reservation queue based on a priority of the user.

52. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 51, wherein the user advances in the reservation queue as other users are removed from the reservation queue, and when the user reaches the first position within the reservation queue, providing the user with exclusive control of the apparatus and notifying the user that exclusive control has been provided.

53. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 51, wherein the user advances in the reservation queue as other users are removed from the reservation

queue, and when the user reaches the first position within the reservation queue, notifying the user that exclusive control of the apparatus can be obtained and waiting a predetermined time for the user to confirm that exclusive control is to be provided.

54. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 53, wherein after the predetermined time has elapsed, removing the user from the reservation queue and notifying the user that the user has been removed from the reservation queue.

55. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 53, wherein after the predetermined time has elapsed, moving the user to a new position within the reservation queue.

56. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 55, wherein the new position is a last position within the reservation queue.

57. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 55, wherein the new position is based on the user's priority as compared with other users in the reservation queue.

58. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein the apparatus is a multifunction device and wherein the apparatus' capabilities comprise printing, facsimile, scanning and copying.

59. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein, in a case where the determining step determines that the apparatus is available for the user to obtain exclusive control, further comprising the step of authenticating the user before the user is provided exclusive control of the apparatus.

60. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein, in a case where the user is provided with exclusive control of the apparatus, the executable process steps further comprises the steps of:

obtaining identification information of the user; and

based on the obtained identification information, automatically manipulating a print job within the job queue so as to print out a print job pending in the job queue for the user during a period in which the user maintains exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, while temporarily deferring at least one print job pending in the job queue.

61. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising a step of, if no user is provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, processing a job which reaches a first position within the job queue.

62. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one job, corresponding to the user other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, is deferred from being processed until the

user, who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, pushes a button on the device for relinquishing exclusive control of the device's capabilities.

63. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein the executable process steps further comprises a step of, if no user is provided exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities, processing a job which reaches a first position within the job queue.

64. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 46, further comprising:

control panel for relinquishing exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities,

wherein the at least one job, corresponding to the user other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, is deferred from being processed until the user, who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, operates the control panel to relinquish exclusive control of the apparatus' capabilities.